

# Australian Garden HISTORY

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# Snippets

## 21st birthday for a very old tree

At perhaps 90 million years old, the Wollemi pine *Wollemia nobilis* is no spring chicken — but its discovery as a living tree was made only 21 years ago this year.

The conifer's scientific name comes from the name of Wollemi National Park in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, where the tree was found. It also honours the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service ranger David Noble, who discovered the tree in 1994 while canyoning. During Tree Week in July 2015 Noble spoke at the National Arboretum in Canberra, at celebrations of the 21st anniversary of the discovery.

Horticulturalists and scientists at institutions including the National Arboretum and the Australian Botanic Garden at Mount Annan have already learnt much about the tree and its cultivation. Researchers are investigating aspects as diverse as the tree's evolutionary context, the associated soil fungi, and the waxy 'polar cap' which forms on the growing buds over winter (a possible protection from frost).

The Wollemi pine — like two other trees of similar antiquity, the ginkgo and the dawn redwood — has become a celebrity in the plant world, and promises to become a familiar sight in public landscape plantings. In the short time since its discovery, it has been vigorously propagated for sale. The earliest planting in Australia was at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. It has been planted at the National Arboretum, in many other Australian botanic gardens, and overseas in countries including Canada, Belgium, France, Japan, Monaco, the Netherlands, the UK and the US.



**Cover:** This photograph taken at the National Arboretum shows a young Wollemi pine on an eastward-facing slope, looking over a small ornamental lake in the middle distance. Beyond the tree in the far distance is the city of Canberra, the location for AGHS's annual conference in 2016. Photo: Linda Muldoon

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*Australian Garden History* welcomes contributions of any length up to 1200 words. Prospective contributors are strongly advised to send a short outline to the editor before submitting text or images.

The views expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and are not necessarily shared by the Australian Garden History Society.



# Guest editorial

John Taylor



The world is changing at what appears to be an ever faster rate, and the Australian Garden History Society is changing too. As a membership organisation, we are constantly reviewing what we offer members, so that we can stay up to date and relevant.

At our core, what we do and what we stand for hasn't changed. We promote awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes through engagement, research, advocacy and activities for our members. But though the

gentle art of gardening doesn't change all that much, just about everything else is changing. Technologies for communicating continue to change with remarkable speed. The main face of the Australian Garden History Society is now our website. We have allocated funds for a substantial update, to make it easier to find details of events and resources such as conference proceedings. This year almost half of conference bookings were made on the website.

We are also working to have a profile on social media, and had good success at the Victorian Branch's recent Tree Forum in raising interest on Twitter.

In an exciting development, the annual Australian Garden History Society conference for 2017 will be held in Hamilton, New Zealand. It is the first time our annual conference will have taken place outside Australia. As well as offering new experiences for existing members, we hope that it will help us to increase our New Zealand membership.

Membership is important to us in many ways. Like most societies of this sort, we are constantly striving to maintain our membership, even though attendance at conferences and events continues to be very strong. The society's management committee has devoted a lot of time to the consideration of membership issues. In 2015, what do we have to offer to attract and hold new members? We recognise that our communities are changing. We have longer hours devoted to work, do less volunteering, and have a reluctance to increase our commitments. There are changes in how we spend our leisure time, what we read and how we read it. (For this journal, *Australian Garden History*, members are telling us that they prefer the traditional hard copy.)

Finally, prosperity and a growing population are creating development pressures which are changing the familiar landscapes of our cities and towns and sweeping away historic gardens. The Society's advocacy has been effective in some cases, but this is certainly an area in which we could do more. Given the political support for development, our efforts will have to be concentrated on gardens and landscapes which are clearly of high conservation significance.

**John Taylor** is outgoing chairman of the AGHS national management committee.

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Bronwen Glenister Thomas

## *Glen Wilson, landscape architect and garden designer*

Glen's Purple No 2 hybrid 'Mauve Mist' x 'Reeves Pink', 24 November 2012, Glenburn, Victoria.  
Photo: Bronwen Thomas

Glen Wilson worked in landscape design and construction for almost 50 years. He was influenced by Edna Walling and Bernhardt Schubert, and was one of the earliest landscape designers to promote the bush garden concept. He has had a long-term interest in callistemons.

My uncle Glenie Wordsworth Wilson (born in Adelaide on 13 September 1927) was named for his mother's family name and his father's favourite poet — and he was never known as anything but Glen! His father died when Glen was only nine, leaving the family destitute during the Great Depression. He was a latecomer to garden design and landscaping, after earlier serving a trade

apprenticeship. Although he hated the early work, he later found its skills useful (in making metal chess sets by lathe work, for example).

Glen joined the Box Hill landscape contractor EH Hammond in the 1950s, and worked on garden construction and planting for Edna Walling, whom he had previously met through Bernhardt Schubert at the Schubert display garden and nursery in Noble Park. This garden had a huge impact on Glen and many others. It inspired him in his work with Australian natives. Glen worked and studied with Walling, and adopted many of her philosophies in the use of space and natural settings, and so began his love of Australian plants and knowledge of how they should be used to develop an Australian character in landscape designing. With EH Hammond, he built on these



planning and design skills by constructing and planting large gardens and landscapes, sharing his love of Australian plants with others who have been his lifelong friends and colleagues.

Glen is a founding member of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and a Fellow of the institute. He wrote a number of professional articles and published three books — *Landscaping with Australian plants* (1975), *Amenity planting in arid zones* (1980) and, most recently, *Landscaping for Australia* (2011). His art has included comic drawings and cartoons to illustrate particular garden design ideas. With the use of his own darkroom, he created a huge photographic collection.

His publications show that Glen (in his own words) will 'leave more than a little speck of dust behind, helping Australian people realise their country's uniqueness because of its isolation'. His strong landscaping philosophies include the planting of trees with the potential to become majestic, and his use of native plants. In using them, he was influenced by observing how and where plants grow naturally, especially in the mountains — his favourite area being Victoria's Grampians.

Although he championed native plants, Glen loved camellias and other exotics. When he retired from teaching landscape architecture and moved from Canberra to Benalla, his new garden there reflected his love of natives, especially eucalypts,

acacias, and a great collection of callistemons and melaleucas. He had a notable group of *Eucalyptus caesia* subsp. *magna*. He has photographed many of the plants included in the collections he made.

Influenced by a six-month trip to Israel in the late 1970s on study leave, Glen believed that in largely semi-arid Australia we should adopt some of the water-saving measures used in the Negev Desert. He designed landscapes to direct water unobtrusively to where it would be of greatest value to plants, as well as using swales and farm shelterbelts.

Glen always saw and wanted to create 'the landscape' rather than just a garden, and believed that there should always be room for a canopy of trees above other plants. He became a teacher almost by default. Although he made a success of it, he felt that his lack of tertiary qualifications limited his acceptance by the tertiary community.

In his own words (from notes for articles written for *The Age* [Melbourne]), his 'philosophy and approach to design includes defining landscape design and its role in all scales of landscaping [and] establishing the character of a landscape'. His landscaping also involved other issues such as the basics of surveying the site, planning the space in relation to site structures, and using water in the landscape by using more-natural means of containing water such as ponds and pools.



Glen Wilson on a callistemon tour of inspection at Glenburn, 2 December 2012.

Photo: Bronwen Thomas





Callistemon 'Perth Pink', Glen Wilson's Benalla garden, 2007. Photo: Glen Wilson



Callistemon Red No. 8, Glen Wilson's Benalla garden, 2008. Photo: Glen Wilson



Massed callistemons, Glen Wilson's garden, Benalla 2008. Photo: Glen Wilson

## Glen Wilson's callistemons

Collecting bottlebrushes or callistemons has been Glen's special interest for more than 30 years. (Some botanists and herbariums — but not all — now use the genus name *Melaleuca* for many of the plants we know as callistemons.) He holds the registration for a number of cultivars and raises hybrid callistemons.

Glen's love of callistemons and interest in hybridising them led to an expansion of plantings on a property owned by the author and her husband at Glenburn, just north of the Great Dividing Range in Victoria. Here we established dedicated callistemon gardens for Glen's own propagated plants and some known varieties (many have also been planted in our son Gareth's garden).

The Black Saturday bushfires in February 2009 wiped out the native gardens at Glenburn, including the whole of these callistemon plantings. When Glen heard this he urged us to water the area as soon as possible after the fire. With no power, and with all pumps and hoses burnt, this was a challenge, but seven months later masses of callistemon seedlings appeared. Many of the original callistemons regrew from the roots. Many seedlings have been left in situ and have flowered brilliantly; many more have been given to family and friends. Glen was horrified at the increasing cost of registering callistemon hybrids, so we are just carrying on his tradition of naming them after family members. All are labelled and photographed as Glen had wanted, although he is now not able to visit regularly to see their progress.

I have most of his digital photo collection and the abstracts and 'design ideas' sketches used in his first book. As a family historian and someone who is not of the landscaping fraternity, I had no idea that assembling Glen's writings into a publishable form would take such a long time.

### Reference

Jo Hambrett, 'A short history of Australian garden design', talk to the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, 28 July 2004, available at <http://anpsa.org.au/design/rise.html>.

Glen Wilson's niece **Bronwen Thomas** is assembling his collected writings. She has compiled a manuscript which already exceeds a thousand pages, and includes contributions from a number of his friends.

If readers wish to contribute information on Glen Wilson or his gardens, please contact her at [bgt9.13@gmail.com](mailto:bgt9.13@gmail.com).





Anne Vale

## *The 'Old Garden' at Wombat Park*

The buildings, grounds and notable tree plantings of the historic property Wombat Park in central Victoria are listed by the National Trust. Beginning in the 1850s William Stanbridge created an outstanding garden here.

You know you are somewhere special when you pass through the wrought iron gates and along the magnificent avenue of spreading English elms. Through another set of gates and round the bend, you get your first glimpse of the Arts and Crafts house designed by architect Rodney Alsop, set in a fine example of a homestead garden designed by master landscape designer William Sangster.

Wombat Park is on the outskirts of the spa town of Daylesford, 113 kilometres northwest of Melbourne in the foothills of the Great Dividing

Range. The garden is noted for the impressive selection of mature trees in the 'Old Garden', established by William E Stanbridge from the early 1850s, and for the 'New Garden' created by his daughter Florence.

Before European settlement the area was occupied by the Dja Dja Wurrung people. The garden and paddocks on the western side of nearby Spring Creek benefit from rich volcanic soil. To the east the thin shale is less productive for agriculture, but historically rich in mining wealth. The paddocks and Isabel Mackenzie's flock of grazing sheep now provide a bucolic backdrop to this cool climate garden. Autumn comes early, and winters are long with occasional flurry of snow. Temperatures range from 10–37° C in summer to 1–9° in winter. The annual average rainfall is 870 mm, but in a drought year there has been as little as 445 mm.

Wombat Park's wrought iron gates and avenue of English elms.

Photo: Anne Vale

## Establishing Wombat Park

The buildings and gardens of Wombat Park were registered with the National Trust in 1965; the listing was revised in 1998. The house and stables are listed for their architectural and historical significance. The gardens are listed for their historical, scientific and aesthetic significance as a fine example of a 19th century homestead garden, for their relationship with the town of Daylesford and strong links with WE Stanbridge, for the retention of 19th and 20th century elements including the mature elm avenue, arboretum, lawns and long vistas, and for the rare and outstanding trees and shrubs dating from the 1850s, some of which are listed on the National Trust Register of Significant Trees.

William Edward Stanbridge (1816–94) migrated from Warwickshire, England, in 1841. He became a pastoralist, mining investor and Member of the Legislative Assembly. By 1851–52 he had purchased the Wombat Run, which he had surveyed at the same time as the township of

Top: By 1860 Stanbridge had built the substantial brick stable and coach house complex.  
Courtesy National Trust

Bottom: The coach house today.  
Photo: Simon Griffiths



Wombat (later renamed Daylesford). Discovery of gold on his property a decade later resulted in the Spring Creek diggings. The royalties and rent from various companies brought him great wealth which he used for philanthropic work.

Stanbridge originally lived in a modest cottage, which still stands on Spring Creek below the present homestead. From the early 1850s he began establishing an extensive collection of exotic trees and planted a great variety of vines, fruit and nut trees. In 1854 a government survey described his holding as comprising 'three buildings, a square fenced garden, a small patch of arable land and a large fenced paddock'. By 1860 he had built a substantial brick stable and coach house complex, and by 1872 a second timber homestead (relocated to Daylesford in the 1930s). In 1877 he married Florence Colles of Castlemaine. Florence died at the age of 27 giving birth to William's only child, a daughter. William Sangster, writing as Hortensis in the *Australasian* (May 1885), described the garden with its trees and extensive kitchen garden:

*In the immediate vicinity of the residence a large area has been cleared and planted, and in this rather out-of-the-way place anyone interested in arboriculture will find examples of exotic trees superior to any that can be seen in any private or public garden in Victoria. Most of them have been planted from 18 to 20 years, and although they were allowed what was then considered ample room, Mr Stanbridge has been already obliged to have recourse to thinning.*

Today only remnants of the fruit trees exist but many of the exotic trees survive, including the entrance avenue, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*, several rare conifers, and some outstanding beeches (*Fagus sylvatica*).

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to Isabel Mackenzie for sharing her knowledge and her hospitality, gardener Stewart Henderson, and AGHS member Stuart Read for comments on the New Zealand plant connections and advice on botanical nomenclature.

This article has drawn heavily on Miffy Gilbert's BAppSc(Hort) 1994 thesis 'Conservation analysis and management plan, Wombat Park, Daylesford' for the University of Melbourne's Burnley Campus.

The next issue of *Australian Garden History* features the story of Wombat Park's 'New Garden'.





Wombat Park, spring 2014, showing tapestry hedge on left.

Photo: Simon Griffiths

Far left: William E Stanbridge.

Brooke family collection

Florence Cox in the mulberry tree plantings.  
Brooke family collection

**Dr Anne Vale** ([heriscapes@aussiebb.com.au](mailto:heriscapes@aussiebb.com.au)) is an AGHS member and historian who records and assesses gardens with history. She is the author of *Exceptional Australian garden makers* (2013) and has written garden guides and histories for some significant Victorian heritage gardens.



# Extant trees and shrubs in Wombat Park's 'Old Garden'

Miffy Gilbert

One of my favourite experiences in the Old Garden is to stand beneath the canopy of the heritage-listed Lawson's cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) which has layered itself over the years, resulting in 42 individual trunks. This tree demonstrates so much of what Wombat Park has to offer: the excellent plant selection by WE Stanbridge and successive generations, the magnificent soils and climate of Daylesford, and the inevitable evolution of gardens over time.

Other listings on the register include the nut pine *Pinus quadrifolia* (rare in cultivation), three towering specimens of *Pinus radiata* (each 30–35 metres tall with a diameter at breast height of 3–3.5 metres) and the magnificent avenue of English elm (*Ulmus procera*) lining the entrance driveway through the parkland paddock.

Family photographs and the 1994 survey indicate the former structure of the garden. The main ornamental garden extended north of the house with a large semicircular arc of gravel paths intersected by two connecting gravel walks. The box hedging that once lined these large beds as low edging is still intact in most areas, but is now pruned to a height of 1.2 metres.

The infill planting of these garden beds was clearly abundant. Just one of the garden walks had six Himalayan cedars (*Cedrus deodara*) planted in a small avenue. It was clear early on that selective thinning had to be done and

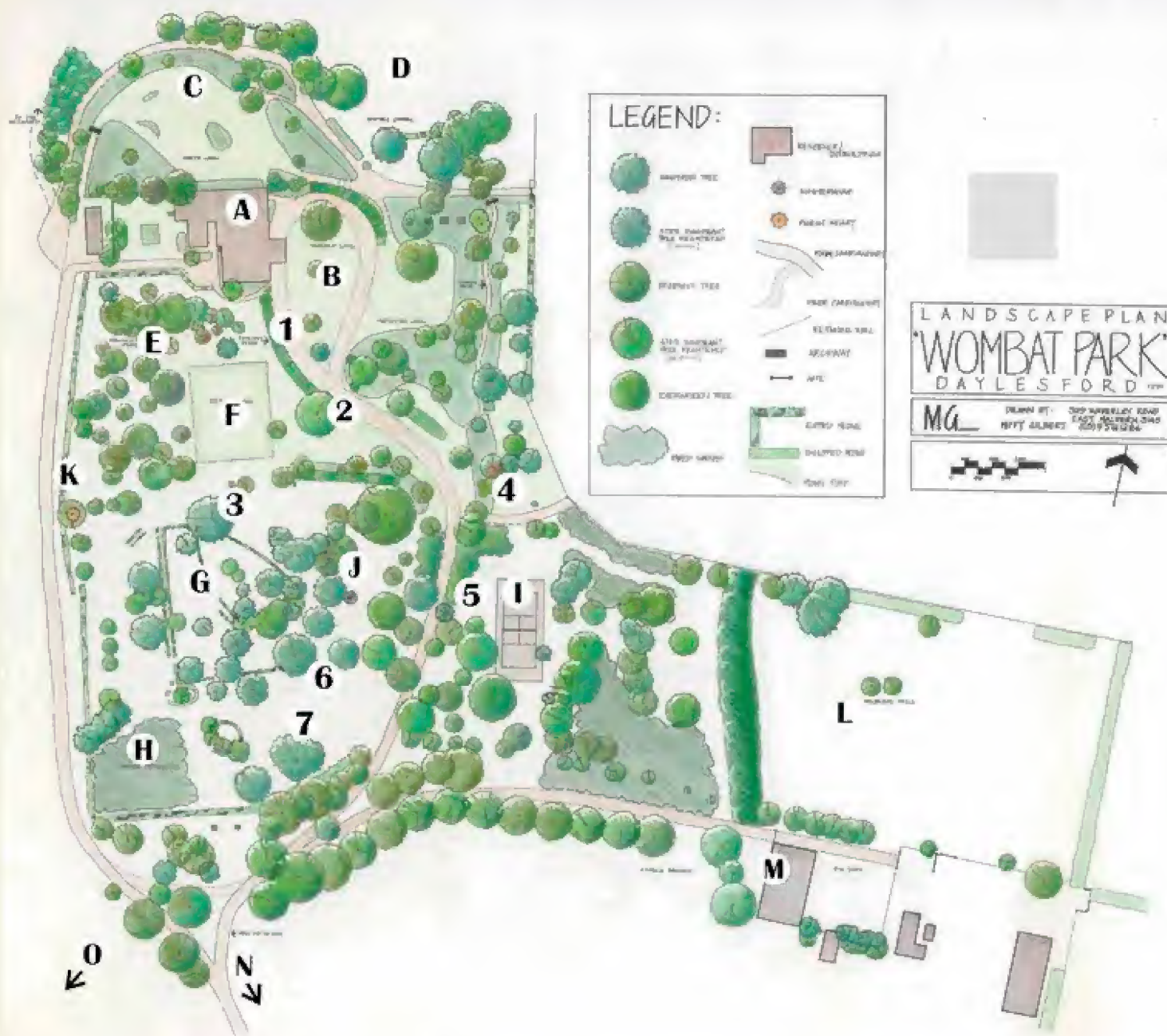
Stanbridge had two removed (sadly only two remain). Trees that were planted as shrubbery infill in 1857 are now huge tree specimens today.

The nearby Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens was established in the 1860s. It received seeds and plants as part of the plant dissemination program of Ferdinand von Mueller, director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens from 1857 to 1873. Stanbridge was well connected, and it is no coincidence that Wombat Park shares many of the plant species at Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens and was being developed and planted at the same time.

The Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) that still stands proudly almost in the heart of the garden is said to have been planted soon after the first seed was exported from North America. It is 60 metres high and has a trunk diameter at breast height of 3.5 metres. Stanbridge was a passionate participant in the Victorian era obsession for possessing the newest and most impressive plant material available from around the globe. He had a thirst for knowledge and a desire to experiment with aesthetic display as well as commercial possibilities. Today the garden attracts dendrologists from around the world to see the outstanding arboretum it has become. Extant features of this period include the entry drive and avenue planting, arboretum and tennis court.

Miffy Gilbert conducted a survey of the garden at Wombat Park in 1994. AGHS (Vic) has commissioned Miffy to review and extend this survey.





#### Key to plan

1 Tapestry hedge, 2 *Castanea sativa* 'Albomarginata' variegated chestnut (removed), 3 *Pseudotsuga menziesii* Douglas fir, 4 *Cordyline indivisa*, 5 *Pinus quadrifolia* nut pine (registered), 6 *Pinus radiata* Monterey pine (group of three, registered), 7 *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* Lawson's cypress (registered).

A new residence, B teardrop lawn, C north lawn, D productive garden, E deciduous forest, F croquet lawn, G Old Garden arboretum, H old residence site, I tennis court, J summer house, K pigeon aviary, L mulberry patch, M stables, N elm avenue, O parkland paddock.

1994 plan of  
Wombat Park.  
Miffy Gilbert





Tony Hall

# *What has happened to the Australian backyard?*

Aerial view showing a housing scheme at Carina, Brisbane, built in 2007–08. Note the older suburban layout with large backyards, on the lefthand side of the main road.

Photo: AUSIMAGE© Sinclair Knight Pty Ltd

Until the end of the 1980s, nearly all suburban houses in Australia had large backyards. Today, these older suburbs commonly have backyards of at least 150 m<sup>2</sup>. They are often several times as big, and usually have significant tree cover. On these older lots, also often known as blocks, houses generally cover 20–30% of the area, with a maximum of 35–40%.

In the early 1990s, this began to change dramatically. The provision of large backyards in new constructions ceased, and the figure of 35–40% lot cover is now a minimum rather than maximum. Although there are backyards of 100 m<sup>2</sup>, most are much smaller — often less than 50 m<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, the gap between the dwelling and the lot's side and rear boundaries is frequently a thin strip of land rather than a more useful square.

This change has not been subtle or gradual. It is immediately apparent from even a cursory examination of aerial photographs that there are two distinct patterns — older areas have tree cover, while in the newer ones dwellings can be nearly roof-to-roof.

Is this the result of smaller suburban lots? There is a trend to smaller lot size in Australia, but it is the increase in the dwelling area, rather than the decrease in the lot size, that has led to shrinking suburban gardens. There has been a trend towards deep, square houses with large internal spaces, little natural light and ventilation, and fewer and smaller windows. Narrow gaps around the houses are often lined by high opaque fences. The frontage is dominated by integral garages. You can find all of this everywhere in Australia,



including outback towns, and it can be at its worst in the outer suburbs of cities where lots are still fairly large.

### What are the effects of bigger dwellings?

Why should the minimisation of green space around buildings be a problem? Domestic backyards and communal green space for apartments have an ecological function and importance that goes beyond the interests of the individual household. In newer residential developments, only a small proportion of the total land area is permeable and planted, aside from the front lawns. There is now no room for trees at the sides and backs of the houses, which means a substantial and lasting reduction in suburban tree cover. Although there may be space for shade trees at the front, they are rarely provided.

The interaction of trees, plants and water is important in helping to make a more pleasant microclimate, especially in hot and dry Australia. The reduction in width between dwellings makes natural ventilation very difficult. The narrowness of the gaps between the houses prevents airflow around them, creating heat-island effects.

Prevailing winds skim over the roofs without exerting enough air pressure within the gaps to create natural ventilation. The problem is exacerbated by exhaust from air-conditioners and by the use of dark-coloured roofs which absorb, rather than reflect, the heat. All this results in an unpleasant milieu around the house and increased electricity consumption for the residents.

The reduction in permeable surface areas increases stormwater run-off, which means increased costs for concrete stormwater drains, not just within any development but also for other communities 'downstream'. It also means a loss of water that could have been used on site for local plantings, which would encourage biodiversity. This is particularly important in the Australian climate, where long dry spells can be punctuated by episodes of heavy rainfall.

### What we are losing

In the older suburbs, garden plantings (sometimes known as 'soft landscaping') in adjoining backyards host a high degree of biodiversity. Domestic gardens have a density and variety of plantings that is not found elsewhere. When we minimise or eliminate

Contrasting house and yard configurations for lots of the same size. In the foreground, the lefthand house takes up most of the lot, and there is little natural light and ventilation. The righthand house has a smaller footprint but a large yard for recreation. This is not an inner urban location, but the remote mining town of Newman in Western Australia.

Photo: Tony Hall







Camp Hill, Brisbane, Queensland, aerial view showing large backyards and tree cover: It was subdivided in 1945–47 into 600 m<sup>2</sup> lots.  
Photo: AUSIMAGE© Sinclair Knight Pty Ltd

planted areas, there are serious consequences for biodiversity in general. Another major advantage of the extensive plantings on older suburban lots is that they can absorb or 'sequester' carbon dioxide and various other pollutants from the atmosphere. Reducing the area of planted green space within a residential development reduces carbon sequestration just when and where it is most needed.

In addition to these benefits to the community as a whole, backyards provide important benefits to individual households. The most important ones — relating to outlook and natural ventilation — apply even if the occupants never venture out into their backyards. One of the most important roles of private open space around the home is to provide a pleasant outlook from *inside* the dwelling. Where the backyard has been reduced in size or even eliminated altogether, the degree of enjoyment of the house by its occupants also diminishes. Spaces around new outer-suburban houses now are rarely big enough for an in-ground swimming pool. Barbecues may be possible, but space is limited and there might be less opportunity for large outdoor social gatherings. There is not enough space and sunlight to grow fruit or vegetables, and large external rainwater tanks and home composters might also be ruled out. The ability

to dry laundry in the open air becomes limited. Children are the principal sufferers. There is little outdoor space for them to run around in and make a noise without disturbing others, while they are in a secure environment with a responsible adult keeping watch from inside the house. This is especially important for very young children.

### Why do we choose to live in such houses?

Data suggests that the reduction in backyard size in Australia has coincided exactly with substantially longer working hours for middle and higher income office workers. At the same time, the growth in the use of air-conditioning has not only allowed but encouraged an indoor lifestyle. For people buying a suburban house, the focus has become one of investment in buildings, resulting in houses that maximise floor area for minimum construction cost. Planted space around the house is not seen as an investment, and dwellings therefore extend over as much of the lot as is permitted.

### Planning policies

Planning codes in different parts of Australia commonly stipulate that at most about half of a suburban lot can be covered by the dwelling.





Spearwood, Perth, Western Australia, street scene. Note the extensive paved areas, few windows and dominance of wide garages.

Photo: Tony Hall

This might seem reasonable at first sight, but a 2 metre gap around the edge of the lot can easily occupy nearly half of the total area. Some codes require the provision of an outdoor area open to the sky, next to the main living area, but the minimum area is always very small, commonly 16 m<sup>2</sup>.

Although the sizes specified may be inadequate, many building codes do refer to the need for space around houses in terms of amenity value for the occupants. Consideration of the environmental role of the space is almost wholly absent. Moreover, there are no positive policies that ensure the provision of tree cover either at the front or the back of the lot, or through providing shade-giving street trees. In short, the codes do nothing to prevent the loss of significant backyards, nor do they promote the environmental benefits of vegetation around houses.

Green space around dwellings has important social and environmental functions and is an essential component of sustainable living. We cannot simply substitute public parks — we need to improve our thinking about how we integrate planted areas within the urban fabric. The demise of individual suburban gardens should concern all Australians.



Spearwood, Perth, Western Australia, aerial view of a housing scheme from the early 2000s. Note the large sizes of the houses. The lot sizes are identical to those of the Camp Hill view on page 14.

Photo: © CNES @ 2004-2007/ Spot Image

For the full story see Tony Hall's *The life and death of the Australian backyard*, CSIRO Publishing, 2010, winner of the 2012 Planning Institute of Australia Award for Excellence in Cutting Edge Research.

**Tony Hall** is a professor with the Urban Research Program at Griffith University in Brisbane and Emeritus Professor of Town Planning at Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, UK.





Colin Jamieson

# The shrinking of New Zealand's quarter-acre paradise

Left: Henry Wright and his son Reginald Wright in the vegetable garden of their home, 1892.

Photo: Henry Wright National Library of New Zealand

Right: Most households in rural areas had large vegetable gardens and kept domestic fowls. This couple were photographed in 1911, probably in the Taranaki district.

Photo: James McAllister National Library of New Zealand

The author in 1948, winner of the certificate of special merit shown here. Behind him is the family's large domestic garden with fruit trees. Jamieson family collection

From colonial times most New Zealand houses had backyard vegetable gardens providing cheap and fresh produce. Since the mid-20th century the productive quarter-acre garden has become an increasingly less common — and apparently less desirable — goal.

In 1849–50 surveyors and planners for New Zealand were thinking of 'fruitful gardens on quarter acre paradises'. This sort of land division, probably influenced by John Loudon's work in Britain and by colonial Australian settlement, became established as the ideal for New Zealand

homes. But according to New Zealand's Real Estate Institute president Murray Cleland, the quarter-acre dream for first-home buyers should now be relegated to history books. Cleland sees the quarter-acre (1012 square metre) 'section' — as it is known in New Zealand — as an anachronism, with aspiring home owners opting for apartment living in order to get a foothold on the property ladder (*Wellington Dominion Post* 28 March 2008).

British politician Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who was instrumental in much of the early colonisation of South Australia and New Zealand, was motivated by ideals which included land for everyone and the right to leisure as well as work.





During the mid-19th century, first New Zealand and then Australian workers claimed a 40-hour working week, which left time for pleasures such as sport and gardening. Economic hardships during the first half of the 20th century — from World War I through the Great Depression and into the years of World War II — also heightened the desirability of living off the land. By the time of World War II the typical quarter-acre section in a village or town was a narrow oblong block measured by the surveyor's 'chain', with a street frontage of 66 feet (20.1 metres) and a length of 165 ft (50.3 metres).

## The front garden

This section typically had two gardens, a front garden with a semi-public approach area between the street and the house, and a more utilitarian back garden. The front garden featured the more personal ornamental area. It was generally regarded as the preserve of the woman of the house and was smaller than the backyard. There was usually a simple but elegant fence over which neighbours could socialise, or criticise the competence, taste and diligence of the wife. Visitors went to the front door; family and intimate friends went to the back.

Aesthetics of the lawn, often mown by a child and sometimes by the child's father, demanded that edges be neatly trimmed. Flowerbeds occupied a strip beside the house and paths and along the fences; sometimes a geometrical flowerbed was cut into the lawn. Most of these plots were beds of annuals, bulbs and perennials planted according to the whims, opportunities, advice and contributions of friends and relatives, or from items purchased at the Country Women's Institute plant tables. If there was an area upon which wire netting could be hung there would be sweet peas or clematis. Daphne, azaleas and roses were abundant.

Children seldom played in the front garden even though it had a lawn. That freedom was reserved for the backyard, which was often screened off by fruit trees or decorative trees.

## The backyard

The backyard had a service area for the clothesline, play area, garage, workshop, toolshed and wood shed. Until the mid-20th century, the backyard normally included a washhouse and outside toilet. The backyard also featured a utility area, vegetable beds, a compost heap, beds for 'hobby' plants and flowers for cutting, cold frames, and space for poultry and pets.

Generally, it was the men who dug the backyards of their quarter-acre blocks and planted vegetables and flowers for the kitchen. With this produce,



they competed at A & P (agricultural and pastoral) shows, horticultural and church shows, and proudly displayed their trophies on the kitchen mantelpiece or in the china cabinet.

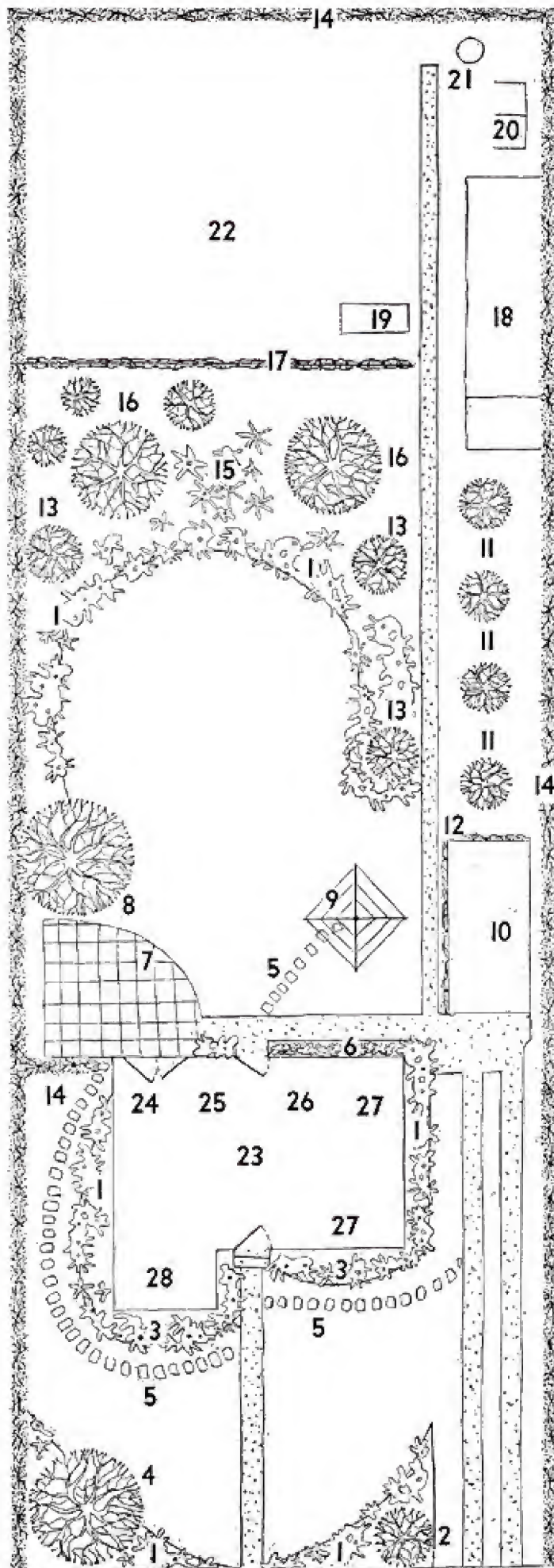
The backyard was where the prize blooms of flowers such as gladioli, daffodils, dahlias, lilies, and orchids were grown. Gardeners experimented with growing techniques and hybridisation. Enthusiasts who started off as hobbyists experimentally breeding a particular species sometimes became specialist growers of plants such as geraniums, fuchsias and various bulbs. They provided the thrust for the horticultural shows, and developed new cultivars. Corms and bulbs were sold through catalogues, flowers were sold at the home gate through honesty boxes, and blooms were sometimes sent to the markets or sold directly to florists.

In New Zealand, trees towards the front of the quarter acre section were decorative — rhododendrons, snowballs and eucalyptus. The backyard held fruit trees such as persimmons, Chinese gooseberries, cumquats and other citrus,

Some fruits available in New Zealand in the early 20th century, shown in an illustration from a catalogue of Thomas Horton's, Pahiataua, published in 1904–05. The fruits are a Prince of Wales peach (centre), surrounded by (clockwise from top left) Williams' Bon Chretien [Bon Chretien] pear, the new Madame Melba strawberry, Brigg's Red May peach and P Barry pear.

National Library of New Zealand, Eph-A-HORTICULTURE-Horton-1905-01-16





often used to screen the outside toilet, chicken run or pig pen. In the 1940s the New Zealand Departments of Education and Agriculture established Boys' and Girls' Gardening and Agricultural Clubs. The excitement of being handed packets of seeds or a brown paper bag of bulbs, and later receiving a certificate for a garden project, was memorable for this author — and no doubt for many others.

### Shrinking sections

During the latter part of the 20th century, homes acquired fences up to two metres high for their front gardens, and mega-stores entered the plant market, providing cheaper but less hardy plants with more limited choices. Some New Zealanders still choose a rural life, and there are still quarter-acre sections in small towns. However, while the average size of a new house in New Zealand grew by about 60% from 112 square metres in 1940 to 192 square metres in 2011, section sizes have shrunk.

Commenting on Auckland townhouse style 'villa' developments on sections of 350 square metres, reporter Adam Dudding observed, 'Someone has nicked the back lawns and fed steroids to the houses' (Auckland *Sunday Star Times* 22 August 2010).

Land is increasingly being covered with concrete or plastic weed mats, and flowers restricted to pots or small areas decorated with textured plants. Anything that will survive without care is regarded favourably.

Do we want to consign the ideals, hopes and confidence of our pioneers to the history books? Have we considered how we might retain the benefits of home gardens and special interest gardening groups? Or will we shrug our shoulders and say 'She'll be right, mate', farewelling the quarter-acre paradise, and letting the Kiwi home garden pass into history?

Plan for a typical mid-20th century quarter acre section, marked out roughly according to the purposes of the various areas.

1 Mixed flower border, 2 upright deciduous shrubs 10–20 ft (3–6 m) high, 3 shade-loving shrubs or perennials, 4 compact evergreen tree, 5 stepping-stone path, 6 herb bed, 7 paved outdoor living area, 8 tall, spreading deciduous tree, 9 clothesline, 10 garage and tools, 11 dwarf apples, 12 fruit tree on trellis, 13 large evergreen flowering shrub, 14 hedge, 15 ornamental shrubs, 16 fruit trees, 17 grapes, Chinese gooseberries or climbing roses, 18 fowl house, 19 garden frame 20 compost, 21 incinerator, 22 vegetables (23–28 house and rooms).

From JP Salinger, JS Say and KH Marcussen, *Flower gardening with the Journal of Agriculture*, Whitcombe & Tombs, New Zealand, 1962, p. 17.

**Colin Jamieson** lives in Lyttelton, New Zealand, and has recreational interests in gardening and art. He has written for a number of journals, most recently on the rediscovery of *Gladiolus x brenchleyensis* in Christchurch.





Lynsey Poore

## *Jardin Albert Kahn, Paris*

The Jardin Albert Kahn in Paris's western suburb of Boulogne-Billancourt is more than a century old. The garden has re-created areas of contrasting landscapes from around the world, and the Kahn museum and archives hold a remarkable collection of early colour photographs.

Albert Kahn was born in 1860 in Marmoutier, Alsace. After the German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871, his family moved to northeastern France where Albert gained an education in letters, science and law. He became a banker with the Goudchaux Bank, one of the most important financial houses in Europe, and started his own bank in 1898. His considerable fortune enabled him to work towards his ideal of universal peace.

Kahn is known, among other things, for starting the 'Archives of the Planet', a huge photographic project for which he commissioned images by photographers and film-makers of many cultures around the world. It was prompted by a journey to Japan and his desire for crosscultural peace and understanding. These images are now housed in a museum at the entrance to the gardens.

They are autochromes, the first industrial colour photography process, which was marketed by the Lumière company. It revolutionised photography. To build his collection, Kahn sent photographers to more than 50 countries, accumulating 72,000 photographs which include the first colour photographs taken in countries as far apart as Vietnam and Norway.

Kahn was passionate about gardens and his own garden used a series of landscapes to reflect his vision and the philosophy behind it. The Great Depression

Meandering stream in the English garden of the Jardin Albert Kahn.  
Photo: Lynsey Poore



ruined him and put an end to his project, but his legacy lives on through the collection of film and photographs, and in his exquisite and stunning garden sheltered by high walls.

Kahn began creating this unique four-hectare garden facing the Seine in 1894. The garden he created is of a type specific to the 19th century, with several distinct scenes from different parts of the world:

- a garden in the French style with a rose garden and an orchard
- an English garden with meadows
- two Japanese gardens
- a 'Vosges forest' of conifers, reflecting Kahn's birthplace
- a marsh garden surrounded by a 'blue forest'.

### The French garden

Kahn engaged well known garden designers Henri and Achille Duchêne to design the first garden to be established, a garden in the French style which paid homage to the classicism of the 17th century.

The French garden was built in 1895 in front of a large glasshouse full of tropical plants. After falling into disrepair, restoration work was carried out in 1989 to return the garden to the original structure and scale that Kahn had planned. In front is a rectangular closely mown lawn bordered by flower beds, always with a monochrome planting. Plants such as pansies, hyacinths, tulips or begonias are chosen to suit the season. This plan is classical French with its geometry of shape and symmetry of lines.

In it, the rose garden is intertwined with an orchard of heritage varieties of apples and pears. The roses are grown on pergolas and trellises; apples and pears are espaliered in the shapes of pyramids, fans and spears.

Left: The glasshouse, with the geometrical lawns and flowerbeds of the French garden in the foreground.  
Right: *Fritillaria montana*.  
Photos: Lynsey Poore



### The English garden

In 1993–94 the English garden was restored based on autochromes from the archives of a gardener who had worked there in the first half of the 20th century. In contrast to the symmetry of the French garden, the English garden with its ponds, streams, grassy meadows and waterfalls evokes a countryside feeling.

A little stream borders the lawn area and falls into a pool surmounted by a rockery. The rustic bridge to the rockery is bordered by concrete rails cast in the form of tree branches. Water is the defining element here, and the sound of water falling into placid pools and quiet streams is pleasing to the ear.

In spring the grass area is edged with bulbs — daffodils, crocuses, wood hyacinths and fritillarias, which form a vast flowery tablecloth. Larger plants are selected for their foliage to enhance a play of light and shadow. Trees such as ginkgos, limes, birches and maples are planted around the meadow, while plane trees line the sides of the garden.

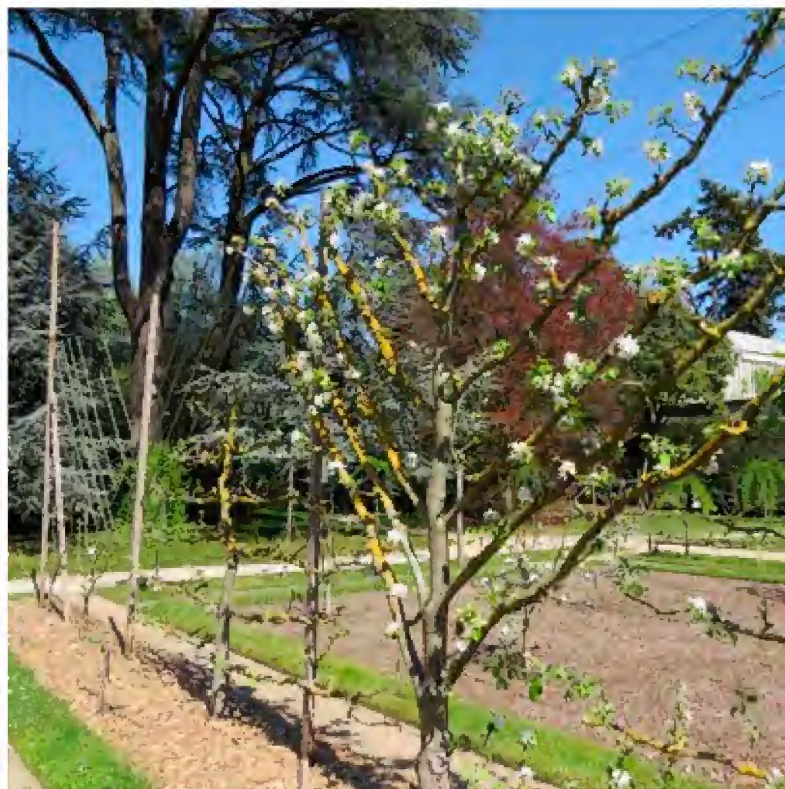
One of three cottages built in the Normandy style remains. It reveals that the banker choose to represent at Boulogne the countryside that was so dear to him.

### The Japanese village

The Japanese 'stroll garden' is the centrepiece of Jardin Albert Kahn, and is the first area to greet visitors after they pass through the museum. The area was created by Albert Kahn on his return from a voyage to Japan at the end of the 19th century. Japanese artists came especially to design and plant it. Its two traditional houses







were also brought from Japan and until 1952 a five-tiered pagoda stood in this garden. The flora and the rocks are placed in such a fashion to simulate the landscape from the mountains to the sea of Japan. Small winding paths represent a dry river. In spring apple and pear blossom bring colour, while in autumn maples give a blaze of orange-red.

### The contemporary Japanese garden

Before a new garden paying homage to the life and work of the banker was designed by landscape architect Fumiaki Takano in 1988–89, the original Japanese garden had been neglected for more than 50 years. In Takano's design, a pyramid of pebbles symbolises Kahn's birthplace, and from it springs a stream representing his childhood. This becomes a river that flows into a lake overhung by colourful azaleas, representing for the designer the generosity of the banker. The river then leaves these brilliant surroundings, slips under two Japanese bridges and disappears.

### The Vosges forest

In the northwest corner of the garden is the Vosges forest that Kahn put in place in 1902. His aim was to evoke the mountainous landscapes of his Alsatian childhood, an area occupied by Germany after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. In an area of just 3000 square metres the 800,000 hectare forest of the Vosges Massif in Alsace is represented in miniature. Large granite blocks and trees as tall as telephone poles were transported

to this site. On the 'Lorraine' slope of a small hill are hornbeams, oaks and beeches, with daffodils appearing around the rounded granite boulders in spring; on the 'Alsace' slope Corsican black pines, Norway pines, sessile oaks and beech predominate.

Damage from a massive storm in 1999 gave an opportunity to restore and complete the area.

### The blue forest

The blue of the Atlas cedars and Colorado spruce gives this forest its name. Through the planting of these trees, the continents of Africa and America are united in the garden, symbolising a world of peace. I visited this inspirational garden in April 2015. It was my favourite small garden in Paris.

Left: The pyramid of pebbles in the Japanese garden, symbolising for the designer the birthplace of Albert Kahn.

Right: Espaliered apples in the orchard of the French garden.

Photos: Lynsey Poore

#### Recommended reading

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David Okuefuna, 2008. *The wonderful world of Albert Kahn: colour photographs from a lost age*.

S Tivolle and V Perlès, 2012. *Le Jardin d'Albert Kahn: parcours historique et paysager*. Haut-de Seine, Boulogne-Billancourt (available only at the museum and garden).

**Lynsey Poore** is a volunteer guide at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria in Melbourne. She is a frequent traveller to gardens and parks around the world, with a passion for photographing flowers and landscapes.





Paulette Wallace

## *Wassailing, national parks and peopling cultural landscapes*

Huon Mid-Winter  
Festival 2015.  
Photo: Paulette Wallace

How should we conceive of and manage cultural landscapes in Australia? A Tasmanian midwinter festival inspires reflections on the meaning of ‘cultural landscapes’, and on the use of this concept in management policies in the US, Canada and Australia, especially in national parks.

The night air is filled with the clanging of wooden spoons on pots, mixed with the hoots of the large crowd. Elevated above the masses, a man standing on a bale of hay speaks into a microphone. He is a shadowy figure, haloed in fiery torchlight – a cross between a morris dancer and a tree. With painted face and fist punched into the air, he instructs the audience to follow him in song:

*To blow well and to bear well,  
And so merry let us be.  
Let every man drink up his cup  
And health to the old apple tree.*

<http://huonvalleymidwinterfest.com.au>

The Huon Valley Mid-Winter Festival in Tasmania’s south has at its heart the pagan tradition of ‘wassailing’, which involves noisy celebrations to drive out evil spirits and to encourage a healthy harvest of apples – not to mention a fruitful future of cider production. As the crowd sings, cider is tipped at the base of the trees, and it is difficult to determine where nature begins and culture ends. In the shadows, the ‘Wassail King’ is figure of both tree and man. He stands in front of the apple trees as though marshalling his troops, and he is



surrounded by a crowd that is slowly transforming into creatures of the night.

This cultural landscape is more than 'nature' and 'culture', it is greater than the 'tangible' and 'intangible', and it is a ritual that captures the blurred interrelatedness of land and life.

Our descriptions of what the concept 'cultural landscapes' can encompass have amplified in richness beyond catchphrases in which they are 'a bridge between culture and nature', 'an interface between nature and culture', or 'the combined works of nature and man'. Yet despite our growing confidence in recognising and describing our varied and myriad heritage(s) as cultural landscapes, we generally consider their management from a reserved distance. As such, the mechanisms that have been developed to cater for cultural landscapes within heritage management would not easily accommodate the wassailing I describe above.

National park agencies have been leaders in the translation of the ideas of cultural landscapes into practical heritage management. The United States National Park Service and Parks Canada have taken leading roles in incorporating cultural landscapes into their management policies since the early 1980s.

The North American embrace of cultural landscapes has occurred in conjunction with a new phase of conservation biology that recognises the connectivity of humans and ecological processes, and it has influenced cultural landscape management in Australia. Nevertheless, across all three countries, it has been difficult to shake the ingrained belief that the term 'national park' is synonymous only with 'nature'.

### A US national parks approach to cultural landscapes

The US National Park Service recognises cultural landscapes as one of five resource types, the others being archaeological resources, ethnographic resources, historic and prehistoric structures, and museum management. There are four general types of cultural landscapes that are not mutually exclusive: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.

The four general types of cultural landscapes have 'landscape characteristics' which recognise mainly visible, tangible aspects. When grouped together, these give a landscape its 'historic character' (Page & others 1999). The landscape characteristics range from large-scale patterns to site details

and materials, and they provide an organised structure for reporting on cultural landscapes. Yet while landscape characteristics act as a useful organising tool, they also work to control and compartmentalise heritage values in a manner that cancels out the fluid relationships which are such a central component of cultural landscapes.

In addition, this approach to cultural landscapes by the US National Park Service requires someone trained to decipher the different nuances of the landscape characteristics, which excludes all who are not trained in these methods. Perhaps most pointedly, it omits the involvement of the communities which have connections with the cultural landscapes managed by the US National Park Service.

A program of 'national heritage areas', developed alongside the US National Park Service's approach to cultural landscapes, does recognise the contemporary social values of local communities with connections to these areas. Yet national heritage areas are located on land that is not a part of the national park system, they are governed by their own legislation, and they are led by public/private partnerships. The US National Park Service is involved only in an advisory capacity and as a provider of limited financial assistance (National Park Service US).

But while the US National Park Service has dominated the direction taken by cultural landscape policies for heritage management in the United States, a shift has been occurring which promotes an alternative, more localised, cultural landscapes approach — one which recognises contemporary social values as being an extension

The Jolley Hatters morris dancers, a performing morris side from Hobart, at the Huon Mid-Winter Festival 2015.

Photo: Paulette Wallace





of the historical values of the past. This national heritage areas initiative is not incorporated into the US National Park Service's cultural landscapes program, and does not have the status or level of funding that national parks receive.

### Parks Canada's 'cultural landscapes'

In a similar vein to the US National Park Service, Parks Canada defines cultural landscapes as a category of historic place, along with archaeological sites, buildings and engineering works. In Parks Canada's *Standards and guidelines for the conservation of historic places in Canada*, character-defining elements separate the various components of a landscape. The idea of cultural landscapes is therefore not so much about examining how natural and cultural values come together, as it is about grouping together collections of related historic items. At the same time, Parks Canada has also been engaging with the concept of 'Aboriginal cultural landscapes', which focuses on the complex relationship that Aboriginal people have with the land, and which underlines that Aboriginal cultural landscapes 'are not relicts but living landscapes'.

Apart from the cultural landscapes program of Parks Canada, Aboriginal cultural landscapes are

being used directly in national park management plans. This has happened, for example, in Torngat National Park, 'Canada's 42nd and newest national park, established to protect heritage resources and to provide opportunities for Canadians to connect to the Northern Labrador Mountains natural region — an Inuit homeland' (Buggey 1999).

According to the park's management plan, the 'cultural landscape' is one in which people of Inuit heritage still maintain strong connections with the park area, and continue to journey to the Torngat Mountains region to hunt and fish. This usage of 'cultural landscape' is heavily determined by local circumstances. Most obviously, it acknowledges the present day social values which are connected to the heritage values of the past.

### Notions of cultural landscapes in Australia

In Australia, policies have been developed for cultural landscape management in national parks in New South Wales and Victoria which have not been embedded into park management to the same extent as in the US National Park Service and Parks Canada. But what is noteworthy in Australia is the growing local activism advocating



Wassailing at the  
Huon Mid-Winter  
Festival 2015.

Photo: Paulette Wallace



for cultural landscape-inspired initiatives that recognise and manage people's past, present and future heritage values.

One outstanding example is the work of the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation and the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation in southwestern Victoria to acknowledge and care for the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape, and to lobby for Budj Bim's inclusion on Australia's tentative list so that it can be nominated for World Heritage status. Another initiative is the work undertaken by a regional development authority and six local councils in South Australia to recognise the working agricultural cultural landscape of the Mount Lofty Ranges. Then there are the efforts of Ballarat City Council to develop a 'historic urban landscape approach' to manage their changing city in a way that actively engages with its local community, and which respects its historic past, while acknowledging the need for growth.

These local groups are innovating and pushing the boundaries of how cultural landscapes should be considered and managed in Australia, while underlining the need to adjust public perceptions to recognise that national parks agencies are not necessarily the trailblazers to follow. The Australian initiatives also suggest that the direction for how we continue to develop our thinking and practices for the management of cultural landscapes might be found at the local 'grass-roots' level — which has got to be good news for the apple harvest and the future of wassailing in Tasmania's Huon Valley.

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Top: Alcatraz Island National Park in the US includes historic gardens created by those who lived there during its military and prison eras until the penitentiary closed in 1963. The Alcatraz Historic Gardens Project has restored these gardens.

Photo: Paulette Wallace

Centre: Canada's Green Gables Heritage Place on Prince Edward Island is managed by Parks Canada and is associated with author Lucy Maud Montgomery.

Photo: Paulette Wallace

**Paulette Wallace** is the newly appointed Executive Officer for Australia's World Heritage Convict Sites, and is based at Port Arthur Historic Site in Tasmania. Her PhD examined the ways in which cultural landscapes figure in the ideas, policies and practices of park management in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States.

Bottom: Paulette Wallace collects the thoughts of a workshop on Ballarat's historic urban landscape in February 2015.

Photo: Jeremy Dillon





Stephen Utick

## Camellia Ark

*Camellia japonica*  
'Aspasia Macarthur' in  
the Victorian goldfields  
town of Walhalla.  
Photo: Stephen Utick

Australia's camellia heritage is the focus of a proposed new national association, **Camellia Ark**.

Camellias (including tea and other plants of the family Theaceae) have been part of Australian garden heritage and history since the first recorded plantings at Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens in 1823 under the supervision of the Colonial Botanist Charles Frazer (variously spelt, including as Fraser) (1788–1831). Preserving that heritage is now an important task for Australian horticulture, and a challenging one. Increasingly strict but necessary quarantine provisions restricting future entry of a wider range of garden plants, loss of horticultural knowledge of cultivars, and the economic squeeze on specialist nurseries make a bleak picture for the future. This applies not only to camellias but also to an enormous range of ornamental plants in Australia, many of heritage value.

A proposed new national association to be named Camellia Ark aims to meet this challenge. The organisation builds on an earlier project initiated by the EG Waterhouse National Camellia Gardens at Caringbah in Sydney in 2009. This earlier project succeeded in conserving about 200 cultivars of rare and endangered camellias. It also succeeded in removing and conserving mature camellia nursery stock from the once famous Camellia Grove Nursery at St Ives in northern Sydney to a new site at CamelliasRUs Nursery at Glenorie, northwest Sydney, during October 2014.

A key feature of the association would be the empowerment of individuals, other associations, and public and private gardens to act in the cause of preserving this camellia heritage across Australia. In so doing, it would help preserve both a fabulous horticultural treasury and the accompanying garden heritage knowledge for



Australia. Well-documented living collections of heritage plants represent one of the most powerful primary sources in researching garden history.

Under the terms of a draft constitution, the association's aims would be:

- (a) to conserve for Australian gardens rare and endangered species and cultivars of the genus *Camellia* and other plants of the family Theaceae, while promoting the horticultural, cultural and multicultural significance of *Camellia* as a global symbol of friendship, particularly with China, Japan and other countries in the Asian region
- (b) to work with other associations to help Australian gardens conserve rarer cultivars of other ornamental plants and nursery stock, particularly those that as clones require grafting for propagation, and to support future plant breeding
- (c) to promote a supply of rarer camellias to the Australian nursery industry
- (d) for the purposes of conservation, to identify individual specimen camellia trees of relevance to Australian garden history and to maintain a national register of these trees.

These aims encompass much that may well interest garden history enthusiasts across Australia. Identifying heritage camellia trees which are more than 100 years old across Australia would obviously be of interest to the garden history community and to National Trust bodies. One example, already recorded, is a beautiful tree more than 125 years old of a famous Australian colonial cultivar, *Camellia japonica* 'Aspasia Macarthur'. This tree is located in the Victorian goldfields heritage town of Walhalla in Gippsland. It was planted by Irish publican James Barry on the grounds of the now vanished Royal Exchange Hotel soon after 1882.

Investigations into colonial and later Australian camellia cultivars would be of interest to those researching historic nurseries and nursery stock listings. More broadly, the proposed Camellia Ark association will be working with a network of historic gardens and collections, providing rare plants and assisting with identification and conservation. There is the possibility of conducting garden expeditions for its members into secluded yet valuable collections. Already, there are participating public gardens within those districts of interest to the ACT/Monaro/Riverina, Southern Highlands, Sydney and Victorian Branches of the Australian Garden History Society, and the possibility of others in other states. (For further enquiries about these participating gardens, contact the author.)



Above: Conservation of Sydney's historic Camellia Grove nursery stock moved from St Ives to Glenorie in October 2014.



Left: A bloom peeps over a bough of the tree, which is now over 125 years old. This famous Australian cultivar was developed by Sir William Macarthur in NSW in 1848.

Photos: Stephen Utick

The inaugural meeting of the proposed Camellia Ark association will be held at 'Birchgrove' open garden, 16 Fishburn Road, Galston NSW, on Sunday 8 November 2015, hosted by Kate and Paul Stanley and CamelliasRUs.

To register, contact Kate Stanley, [pandkstan@gmail.com](mailto:pandkstan@gmail.com), 02 9653 2202, PO Box 3245, Dural NSW 2158.

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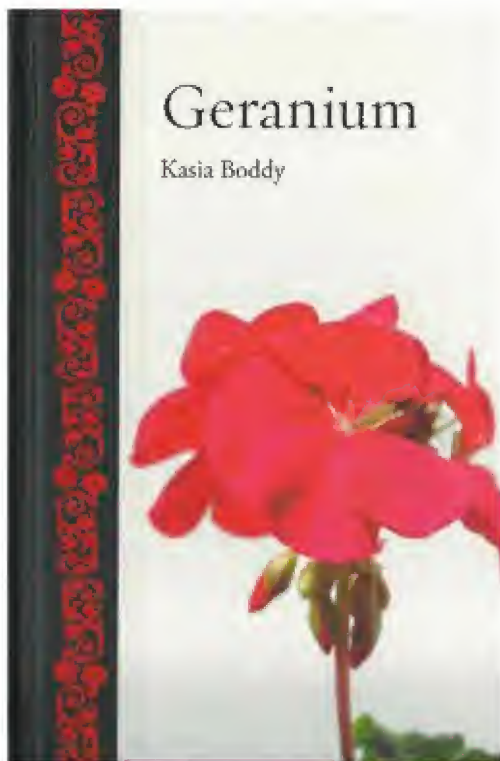
**Dr Stephen Utick** ([sutick@grapevine.com.au](mailto:sutick@grapevine.com.au)) is one of Australia's directors for the International Camellia Society (2015–18). He was coordinator of the now completed Camellia Ark Project, and was awarded the Walter Hazlewood Medal of Honour by Camellias Australia in 2014.



# For the bookshelf

Kasia Boddy (2013) *Geranium*. Reaktion Books, London, hardback, 216 pp, RRP \$29.95

This is a social and cultural history of the geranium, a story which ranges from early spats about its botanical nomenclature to its place in art, literature and the many cultural forms of gardening.



The Cape of Good Hope — a botanical hotspot — was the source of most geraniums, which are, strictly speaking, actually *Pelargoniums*, a hugely diverse species with DNA dating back 18 million years. From the Cape, ships of the Dutch East India Company and other merchant fleets dispersed the geranium plants to Europe, where they fascinated collectors of exotic plants and became exclusive and fashionable. Later their bold colours were seen as being too flamboyant, even dangerously carnal.

Kasia Boddy tells of the myriad representations of the geranium in paint, print and even the electron microscope: in the 1790s it was celebrated on wallpaper and on porcelain Derby soup tureens; it was painted by the French Impressionists, and in the 1950s displayed on English seaside posters. Allusions to the geranium abound in literature — Flaubert, Austen, Dickens (who was a fan) and Thomas Hardy. There is garden history here too, including the popularisation of the greenhouse (affordable from the 1850s), the bedding craze,

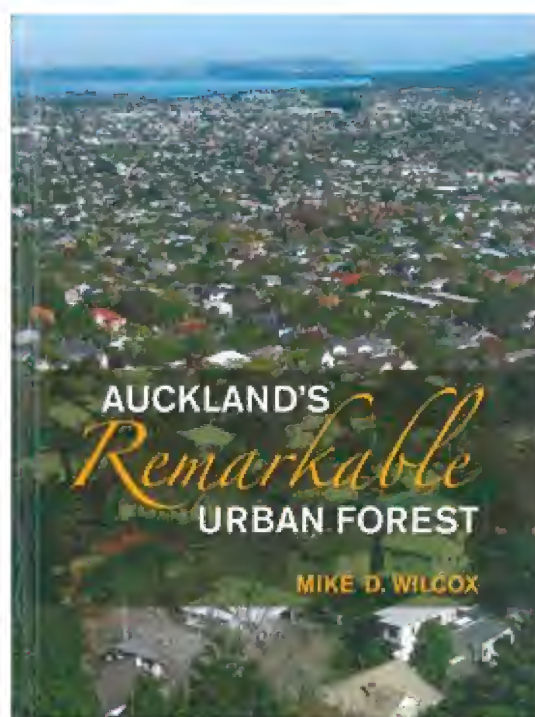
with its choreographed displays of colour, and the ubiquitous window box, the perfect place to display one's geraniums.

While this scholarly and gorgeously illustrated book is now two years old, the series it belongs to is worth noting. London publisher Reaktion describes the series as 'integrating horticultural and botanical writing with a broader account of the cultural and social impact of trees, plants and flowers'. *Geranium* and *Oak* (by Peter Young) are the first two. Others are *Pine* by Laura Mason, *Bamboo* by Susanne Lucas, *Lily* by Marcia Reiss (all 2013), *Grasses* by Stephen Harris, *Willow* by Alison Syme (2014), *Apple* by Marcia Reiss, *Cannabis* by Chris Duvall and *Weeds* by Nina Edwards (2015).

Maggie Brady is an anthropologist who grows geraniums

Mike D Wilcox (2012) *Auckland's remarkable urban forest*, Auckland Botanical Society, Auckland, hardcover, 347 pp, RRP NZ\$50 (available from <https://sites.google.com/site/aucklandbotanicalsociety/home> or e-mail [aucklandbotanicalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:aucklandbotanicalsociety@gmail.com))

This delightful, comprehensive guide opened my Wellington-born eyes to the jewels of Auckland's crown. It must be decades of accumulated wisdom, observation and hard work, distilled into a highly useful visitor's and armchair traveller's guide. How I wish Australian cities had equivalents!





Surveying parks, nature reserves and gardens across one of the largest urbanised areas (albeit low-density) on earth, Mike Wilcox is the perfect guide: learned, fluent, friendly and accessible, while packing in useful information and history. This book is partly based on numerous Botanical Society trips amongst the field of volcanic cones, lava flows and tidal labyrinths framing New Zealand's largest city.

Twenty-two chapters discuss native bush remnants, revegetation, exotic woodland, trees in home garden and on larger sites, and parks in various suburbs. Some chapters explore historic homestead gardens and estates, camp and school grounds and cemeteries. There are chapters on notable trees and flowering trees such as dazzling pohutukawas (Christmas trees) draping beaches in summer with red mantles.

The book surveys climbing and perching plants of the urban forest (New Zealand abounds in epiphytes: ferns, orchids and higher plants), and issues like the health, management, uses and diversity of this forest. An index and references bring depth, making navigation easy and fast.

Wilcox is the president of the Auckland Botanical Society, a Fellow of the NZ Institute of Forestry, a member of the Tree Council, the International Dendrology Society and Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society. He is a retired forestry research director and consultant, and is now an honorary research associate at the Auckland Museum. This museum is located in the Domain, which has its own rich and rare tree collection, thanks to the Acclimatisation Society and enlightened early governors such as George Grey. Recommended.

**Stuart Read**, former chair, AGHS Sydney and Northern NSW Branch

## Recent releases

**Helena Attlee (2014) *The land where lemons grow: the story of Italy and its citrus fruit***, Particular Books, London, published in Australia by Penguin Books, paperback, 262 pp, RRP \$24.99

Helena Attlee, a garden historian and leader of tours to Italy, maps the migration, usage, and role of citrus in Italy's cultural, social, and culinary history, and its place in the Italian imagination. Chapters investigate the diverse, weird, and wonderful citrus collections of

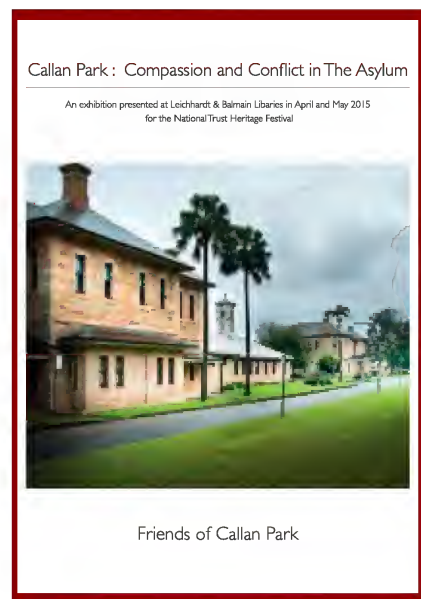
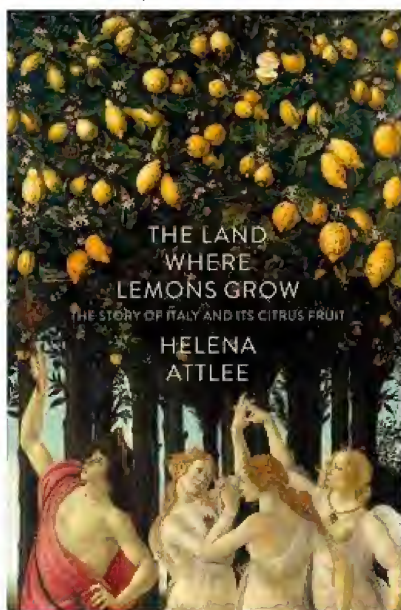
Renaissance Tuscany, the lemon houses (limonaie) on Lake Garda, Liguria's chinotti, Amalfi and Sicilian lemons, the blood orange, the citron, and bergamot. This exploration of the curious past and present of citrus in Italy — which draws from historical documents, literature, oral testimony, and

in-depth experience of place — has produced an engaging book that combines travel writing with recipes and horticultural, garden, and art history.

**Christina Dyson**

**Roslyn Burge, editor (2015), *Callan Park: compassion and conflict in the asylum***. Friends of Callan Park, Sydney, 32 pp, RRP \$15 including postage (available from [www.callanpark.com](http://www.callanpark.com) or e-mail [focp.admin@gmail.com](mailto:focp.admin@gmail.com))

This welcome, lively publication extends two showings of a 2015 exhibition so popular that they urged an after-life. Oral historian Roslyn Burge deserves praise for skilful compilation of an array of voices capturing some of the splendour, struggle and success of this place of retreat and healing. To quote former NSW Governor Dame Marie Bashir (posted as a young doctor here) 'This place has saved thousands of lives'. A positive and uplifting tone comes as you read stories of many players: patients, staff, residents (a girl whose father was the farm manager: milking cows in the middle of





Sydney: 'the only government farm to make a profit'), community members including joggers, dog walkers, lovers of beauty. It doesn't shy away from the shadows: slamming doors, high walls and sadness. Yet shines light on triumphs: lives restored, repose in an uncaring world, its wildlife, rich plantings with magnificent trees and sweeping lawns. Three Victorian gentry estates that became a state-of-the-art psychiatric hospital for the state, that function waning with time, yet health uses remain today. The active campaigning since 1989 to secure its future for the people of NSW. And the palpable joy this place continues to bring comes through — the simple quiet walks, rainforest glades, children playing roly-poly down grass slopes without a care, picnickers, footy players. Recently the government agreed to establish a stand-alone trust to manage its future. Coupled with a master plan for mixed use, this account will inform such planning, with depth, wisdom and warmth.

**Stuart Read**

Liz Chappell (2015)  
*Celebrate the seasons: garden memoirs from New England.* Squires and Chappell, Dundee NSW, paperback, 240 pp, RRP \$40  
 (for stockists and online orders, see [www.lizchappell.com.au](http://www.lizchappell.com.au))

When Liz Chappell returned to the New England area of northern New South Wales, to a garden cultivated by her mother and grandmother before her, she found Australian gardening advice did not prepare her for the challenges of the climate. Plants hardy to drought would not withstand frosts to  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$  in spring as well as winter, and torrential summer downpours drowned many more. Few Australian native shrubs could adapt to the severe cold conditions. Over 20 years Liz, a member of AGHS, has kept a journal of the challenges of restoring the garden. As she writes:

*Three generations of my family have gardened before me at Devon House on the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales.*

*The garden where I had spent my childhood was approaching senescence when I returned to live there. The prospect of taking over its care was daunting, especially because I didn't regard myself as a gardener... then.*

This garden memoir is liberally illustrated with photographs from Kim Woods Rabbidge.



# Our Gardens



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.....

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# Dialogue

## Symphony of Flowers at the Museum of Garden History

There will be flower-filled spring celebrations at the Museum of Garden History at Carrick Hill this year. From 9 to 18 October 2015, floral designers and stylists will transform the rooms of Carrick Hill house with floral installations. Many of the blooms and foliage will be grown and supplied by the gardens at Carrick Hill.

There is also a special evening viewing at 5.30–7.30 pm on 9 October 2015, with music provided by the Adelaide Youth Orchestra. Bookings essential: Kate Sutherland 0419 508 463; cafe open from 5.30 pm.

## Review of the Victorian *Heritage Act*

Victoria was the first Australian state or territory to enact heritage legislation in 1974. The *Heritage Act 1995* established the Victorian Heritage Council and the Victorian Heritage Register and provided for the protection, conservation and registration of places and objects of cultural heritage significance. The Act is administered by Heritage Victoria in the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. It is Victoria's main legislation for the identification and management of non-Indigenous heritage places and objects of state significance, historical archaeological sites and maritime heritage. There are 2300 objects and sites on the Victorian Heritage Register.

As part of the public consultation process, AGHS's Victorian branch has made a submission to the review.



Elery Hamilton-Smith at Buchan Caves Reserve, May 2003  
Photo: Richard Aitken

## Elery Hamilton-Smith

We are sorry to note the passing of Elery Hamilton-Smith (1929–2015), a man whose work on outdoor recreation widened into the fields of environmental studies and sustainability, national parks and karst landscapes. He accepted a chair in environmental studies and worked as an adviser with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the UNESCO World Heritage Bureau. Hamilton-Smith contributed an article, 'The cave gardens of Mount Gambier', to volume 5 of *Australian Garden History*. He also contributed entries on Cave Gardens, Myles Dunphy, Ros Garnet, Dick Hamer, Mount Buffalo, National Parks, and Royal National Park Sydney to *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*.





### A new journal of interest

Readers might like to know about the new *International Review of Environmental History* —its first volume appeared in August 2015. The journal has an interdisciplinary and global approach to environmental history, encouraging scholars to think big and to tackle the challenges of environmental history for different nations and historical periods. Readers come from many disciplines, including history but extending well beyond.

The editor of this refereed academic journal welcomes

submissions from a wide field of subjects including garden history, landscape studies and historical geography. He also encourages articles focused on the southern hemisphere and the 'global south'. For article submissions contact the editor, Dr James Beattie, History, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand, [jbeattie@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:jbeattie@waikato.ac.nz).

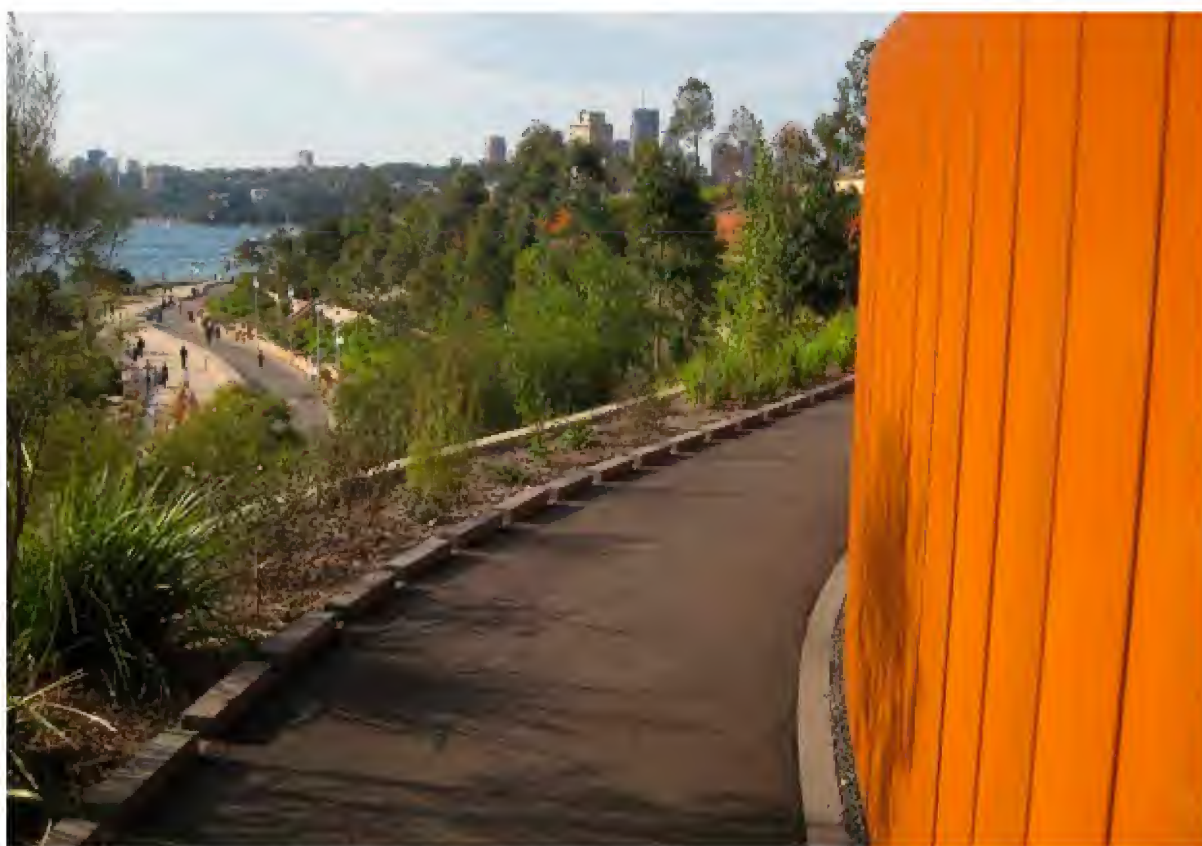
### English Garden History Society becomes Gardens Trust

England's Garden History Society and Association of Garden Trusts merged on 24 July 2015 to become the newly formed Gardens Trust.

Former chairman of the Garden History Society Dominic Cole OBE was elected inaugural president of the Gardens Trust, which has come into being after five years of collaborative work which also involved Parks and Gardens UK (the gardens database and website) and the Garden Museum in London. The Gardens Trust will work towards the protection, conservation and understanding of English gardens and designed landscapes, and aims to be an internationally regarded centre of excellence in the study of garden history.

### Barangaroo

Sydney's six hectare Barangaroo Reserve (named after the Indigenous woman Barangaroo) was officially opened to the public on 22 August 2015. The headland reserve is one of three parts of a redevelopment of industrial land in central Sydney. Its terraced landscaping includes walking and cycle paths, and tidal pools made from the local sandstone. Horticultural consultant Stuart Pittendrigh and landscape architect Peter Walker were major figures in the design; almost all of the species used in plantings occur naturally in Sydney's harbourside landscapes.



Barangaroo Reserve  
on opening weekend,  
August 2015

Photo: Richard Aitken



# Profile: Patsy Vizents

AGHS editorial advisory committee member Patsy Vizents works as the heritage officer on Rottnest Island, Western Australia. She finds new challenges and new areas of knowledge very exciting.

## Did your working life begin the way you thought it would?

Growing up southwest of Perth in the towns of Bunbury and Busselton, I originally had my heart set on being a scientific illustrator, but there was no training available. Graphic design was the closest thing. During my diploma studies I managed to work with the University of Western Australia and the Western Australian Museum, illustrating teaching aids, publications and scientific papers for lecturers and curators in various departments. However, it was teaching that attracted me, and where I developed my love of history. I eventually taught for 12 years at Perth Technical College in art history, photography, design, and an obscure subject — lettering.

## When did gardens come into it?

After teaching I moved to the Art Gallery of Western Australia and was involved with education and management of the voluntary guides, researching the collection and developing tours and talks on many of the travelling exhibitions that were shown in Perth during the early 1990s. Being a nomad by nature, I moved to Sydney and then Melbourne. At the Royal Botanic Gardens I became involved with the Australian Garden History Society.

During my time as a volunteer and exhibitions coordinator with the gardens, I was exposed to plants and garden design and the world of horticulture history, and by that time I had commenced studies in cultural heritage management. At one of the annual Interpretation Australia conferences I met Richard Heathcote, and eventually was enticed to work with him in Melbourne at Como historic house and garden and at Ripponlea, both of which he managed for the National Trust of Australia's Victorian arm.

My work for the National Trust meant full immersion in garden history. The pleasure of working in a 19th century house and garden should never be underestimated, especially when it comes to harvest time. My main activities at the National Trust were developing public programs



Photo: Maggie Bradbury

such as the Slow Food Festival and exhibitions, and managing the volunteer guides, but you get to do everything (and learn a great deal by doing so) with this organisation.

## What happened when you went back west?

Returning to Western Australia, I worked in the southeast of Perth at the City of Gosnells as the heritage officer (I was the first heritage officer to be employed by Gosnells), establishing the oral history program and interpretation centre as well as managing the municipal inventory of heritage places. Gosnells was the citrus-growing centre of the Perth area in the 19th and 20th centuries, exporting produce overseas as well as interstate.

## Are you doing heritage work now?

Yes — I am the heritage officer on Rottnest Island, about 19 kilometres from Fremantle. The limestone island retreat is a favourite holiday retreat for workers and families of Western Australia.

For more than eight years I have been responsible for the health of the island's cultural heritage. I work on maintenance programs of the heritage built and landscape environments, manage the oral history and photographic collections, and have developed a variety of interpretation products such as theatre, exhibitions and self-guided tours. Researching and gathering the information on buildings and activities on the island is one very important part of the Rottnest Island story. It is Western Australia's premier island tourism destination — the protection and conservation of those stories and sites, and how you interpret and tell the stories, excites me about what I'm doing.

I hope that my experience in historical research, my love of interpretation and storytelling, and my ever-growing interest in garden and landscape history can contribute to *Australian Garden History* for many years to come.



# AGHS News

## The Saumarez rose garden project

The new heritage rose garden at the National Trust property 'Saumarez', Armidale, will be officially opened on Saturday 31 October 2015. AGHS patron Sue Ebury, Countess of Wilton, will perform the opening ceremony in the garden, which is open to AGHS members on that day. (It will be open to the public on Sunday 1 November 2015.)

The property was settled by Henry Dumaesq in the 1830s. The rose garden on the ten-hectare homestead is the result of a recent collaborative project by the AGHS (Northern NSW sub-branch) and the National Trust (NSW). The MOU between the two organisations is the first of its kind in Australia.

The garden was based on the donation of about 300 roses by local Armidale resident Catherine MacLean from her own garden's collection. Since then, many more hundreds of roses have been donated by AGHS members and local garden

clubs. The work of transplanting the roses and establishing the garden has taken several years. Extremely dry conditions, unseasonably hot weather, rabbits and weeds meant that volunteers faced difficult conditions for establishing the transplanted bushes.

Ian Telford's imaginative design for 44 concentric beds in the rose garden incorporates flowering fruit tree plantings, in reference to the fact that the garden is established on the property's former orchard.

The next phase of development for the rose garden is planned for 2016, once funds have been raised. It includes plantings of varieties introduced by noted Australian rose breeder Alister Clark (1864–1939), and by the less well known breeders Frank Reithmuller (1884–1965) and Olive Rose Fitzhardinge (1881–1956).

(Based on John Maurer's story in the Sydney and Northern NSW branch newsletter of June 2015.)

A wintry view of the rose beds with their newly installed metal edging.  
Photo: AGHS Northern NSW sub-branch



Left: AGHS and National Trust volunteer Jillian Oppenheimer, co-author of a history of Saumarez, pruning roses.

Photo: AGHS Northern NSW sub-branch

Centre: Aerial view showing geometric design of the rose garden (bottom left of image).

Photo: Google Earth

Right: Local youth group volunteers install gravel paths at the rose garden.

Photo: AGHS Northern NSW sub-branch





# Diary dates

## OCTOBER

**Saturday 31** Heritage rose garden, Saumarez Homestead **NORTHERN NSW SUB-BRANCH**

For details, see page 34.

## NOVEMBER

**Sunday 1** Weston peony farm, Brighton **TASMANIA**

Visit to Weston Farm, specialising in peony roses, which will be in full bloom. Blooms and potted plants for purchase. Details will be available on branch website and in the newsletter.

**Saturday 7** Kangaloon spring gardens day **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

Bus tour 9 am to 4 pm in collaboration with Kangaloon Public School, to an 'old favourite' garden and four other gardens not previously visited. Bookings/enquiries [aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com).

**Thursday 12** Fetherston Gardens **ACT/MONARO/RIVERINA**

5–7 pm, Heysen St, Weston ACT. Cost: AGHS members \$10, non-members \$15 (includes refreshments). Bookings essential, Helen Elliot 02 6284 4749 or [ellieth@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ellieth@bigpond.net.au).

**Saturday 14** Lithgow gardens visit **SYDNEY**

Self-drive tour 11.30 am–4 pm to Hoskins Memorial Church, Eskbank House and Neubeck House at Lidsdale, all with links to landscape designer Paul Sorensen. Bookings/enquiries [Jeanne@Villani.com](mailto:Jeanne@Villani.com).

**Saturday 14** Book launch and open garden **NORTHERN NSW SUB-BRANCH**

Launch of *Celebrate the Seasons* by Liz Chappell. 1 pm, Devon House, 11 Rangers Valley Rd, Dundee NSW. Garden open 10 am–4 pm Sat 14 and Sun 15. Enquiries Liz Chappell 02 6734 4143 or [liz.chappell3@gmail.com](mailto:liz.chappell3@gmail.com).

**Friday 20** End of year function **ACT/MONARO/RIVERINA**

5.30–7.30 pm, Chinese Pavilion, Beijing Garden, Lennox Gardens, Flynn Drive, Yarralumla. Cost: AGHS members \$10, non-members \$15 (includes refreshments). Bookings essential, Helen Elliot 02 6284 4749 or [ellieth@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ellieth@bigpond.net.au).

**Saturday 21** Emu Bottom to Woodlands **VICTORIA**

Self-drive tour—Rupertswood Lake, Caloola, Priorswood, Alister Clarke Rose Garden and Woodlands. 9.30 am, Emu Bottom (Melway ref 362 E5), BYO lunch, car sharing encouraged. Details will be available on branch website and in newsletter.

## DECEMBER

**Friday 4** Christmas party **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

4.30–7 pm, Kim and Peter Martin's garden, 371 Golden Vale Rd, Sutton Forest. Bookings/enquiries [aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com).

**Sunday 6** 'Brookhaven' Christmas party **TASMANIA**

Tom Lyons' garden 'Brookhaven', Deloraine. Details will be available on branch website and in newsletter.

**Sunday 6** Christmas function **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

2–4 pm, Ellis House, 116 Milne St, Bayswater WA. Cost: \$5 (drinks provided, bring a plate). RSVP to Sue Monger [susanmonger@yahoo.com.au](mailto:susanmonger@yahoo.com.au), 08 9384 1575.

**Wednesday 9** Christmas walk and talk **VICTORIA**

Guided visit to HV KcKay Memorial Gardens, the earliest example of an industrial garden, created for the workers of the Sunshine Harvester Works. 6 pm BYO picnic, access from Sunshine Station or parking in Chaplin Reserve, Anderson Rd.





Melbourne's Pioneer Women's Garden State Library of Victoria

## Pioneer Women's Gardens

Melbourne's Pioneer Women's Garden was designed in 1934 by Ballarat-born landscape gardener and horticulturalist Hugh Linaker, 1872–1938 (our apologies for misspelling his surname in our last issue). Linaker worked on botanic gardens in western Victoria, on landscaping at the Buchan Caves, Yarra Bend and Mount Buffalo National Parks, and on the landscapes of many of Melbourne's public buildings. He became State Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in about 1933. By the time of his death five years later, many regarded him as Victoria's leading landscaper.

Melbourne is not the only city with a garden memorial to women pioneers — there are garden memorials in Adelaide and Perth, too. In 1938–40 landscape designer Elsie Cornish (1880–1946) worked on plans for the Adelaide Pioneer Women's Garden, which was completed in 1941 in the Adelaide parklands. It was one of her more significant projects. For plantings she chose holly oak, myrtle, honeysuckle and lilac, and five Lombardy poplars representing the five women of the Pioneer Women's Memorial Trust. At the garden's centre is the statue of a female figure by Victorian sculptor Ola Cohn (who sculpted the Fairies' Tree in Melbourne's Fitzroy Gardens). Among other places,

Cornish worked on landscaping for the University of Adelaide and for 'Broadlees' in the Adelaide Hills, home of the sisters Eva and Lily Waite. She was regarded as one Adelaide's best landscape gardeners.

The Western Australian Botanic Garden in King's Park holds the city's Pioneer Women's Memorial Fountain and Water Garden. A 2.75 metre bronze statue of woman and child by Margaret Priest was erected here in the late 1960s as the centrepiece of the new water garden, and restored with assistance from the artist in 2009.



WA's Pioneer Women's Memorial Fountain  
Photo: D Blumer, courtesy WA Botanic Gardens & Parks Authority



### Mission Statement

The Australian Garden History Society promotes awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes through engagement, research, advocacy and activities.